



St. Mary

Written by Christopher Rizk

No other person from the Old or the New Testament has been glorified like St Mary. She is above the Cherubim and the Seraphim, for she has said through the Holy Spirit, *“Behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His name.”*

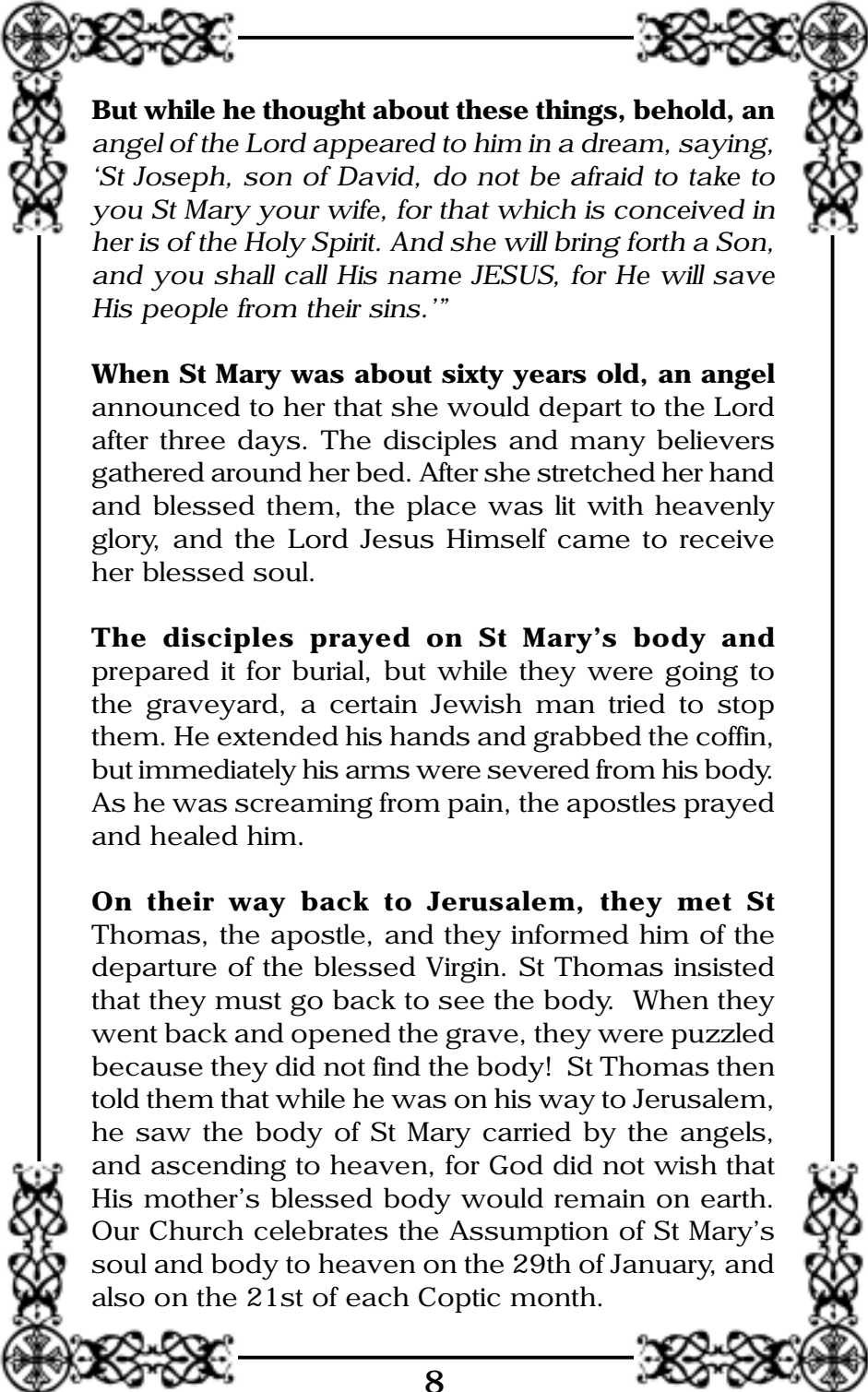
St Mary’s parents were Joachim and St Anne; they were righteous people in front of God. They prayed earnestly asking God to grant them a child. Six years after they were married, they had St Mary, and they knew that she was a special gift from God. They gave her the name St Mary, which means “Royal Incense” because she would become a special offering to God.

When St Mary was three years old, Joachim and St Anne took her to the temple and dedicated their child to God. She spent nine years in the temple. When St Mary was twelve years old, Zacharias, the priest, wanted to find a suitable man who would take care of her. He gathered the staffs of her male relatives and put them in the temple. The next day, the staff of St Joseph the carpenter had budded, just like Aaron’s rod in the Old Testament. St Mary and St Joseph became engaged.

“Now the birth of Lord Jesus Christ was as follows: *After His mother St Mary was betrothed to St Joseph, before they came together, she was found with a child of the Holy Spirit. Then St Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*



St. Mary carrying the Child



But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'St Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you St Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.'"

When St Mary was about sixty years old, an angel announced to her that she would depart to the Lord after three days. The disciples and many believers gathered around her bed. After she stretched her hand and blessed them, the place was lit with heavenly glory, and the Lord Jesus Himself came to receive her blessed soul.

The disciples prayed on St Mary's body and prepared it for burial, but while they were going to the graveyard, a certain Jewish man tried to stop them. He extended his hands and grabbed the coffin, but immediately his arms were severed from his body. As he was screaming from pain, the apostles prayed and healed him.

On their way back to Jerusalem, they met St Thomas, the apostle, and they informed him of the departure of the blessed Virgin. St Thomas insisted that they must go back to see the body. When they went back and opened the grave, they were puzzled because they did not find the body! St Thomas then told them that while he was on his way to Jerusalem, he saw the body of St Mary carried by the angels, and ascending to heaven, for God did not wish that His mother's blessed body would remain on earth. Our Church celebrates the Assumption of St Mary's soul and body to heaven on the 29th of January, and also on the 21st of each Coptic month.